

10-8-1956

Exchange between Chalk & elders of Friendship C of C

elders of Friendship CoC

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**HARDING**
UNIVERSITY

COLEMAN AND DOBBS

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

ACKERMAN, MISSISSIPPI

W. D. COLEMAN
JAMES D. DOBBS

October 8, 1956

Mr. John Allen Chalk, Minister
Northridge Church of Christ
5900 North Dixie
Dayton, Ohio

Dear Brother John Allen,

We wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter under date of September 22, 1956.

Needless to say, the church was most sorrowfully disappointed in your neither coming to labor with us nor giving any indication of your intention not to fulfill your agreement with the elders on the night of May 31st. here at Friendship. Implicit confidence had been placed in your agreement, and all were looking forward with great anticipation to your coming, which had been gladly publicised among the brethren round about.

By your not contacting the elders upon changing your mind, you deprived them of an opportunity of trying to make an adjustment, if such had been deemed warranted, in order to still make sure your working in the Lord's Kingdom here. However, judging from the statements contained in your letter, there had actually been no change in the circumstances upon your returning to Freed-Hardeman from what they were expected to be at the time of our meeting with you last May.

It was for the purpose of defraying your expenses incidental to registering for the Fall Quarter at Freed-Hardeman upon your return from Canada, since you had transportation to and from Prince George and would be supported while there, that the \$60.00 was granted you. However, the \$60.00 of the Lord's money was granted in connection with the mission work, actually, in that it would give you some more security upon your return from Canada. However, if you think that in view of your failure to even enter Freed-Hardeman, and therefore failing to use the money for the stated purpose that you have not used it in the Lord's work but for your own personal convenience, then you may refund it. You and the God of Heaven are the judge of this question. We shall not attempt to determine that.

Now, with reference to your letter, while it is manifest from its entirety that you know in your own mind you have erred against brethren and sisters in the Lord, you fail to make a full disclosure of all the truth concerning your actions.

While no one here has ought against you, it being our considered judgment that all have forgiven you, yet we owe you the duty as your brethren in Christ to conduct ourselves in this matter toward you to the end that you be not injured by this incident and that you might without question be in condition to receive forgiveness for what we, after thorough and prayerful consideration, with all humility, believe to have been a transgression against God; namely, not coming before the eldership with your change of intention so that either the conclusion could have been reached to continue in the agreement or to release you therefrom with all honor and at no loss of respect or confidence and secondly by attempting to rectify the matter without speaking soundly or revealing all the truth pertaining to your acts, the attempt being an effort at exonerating yourself. Your agreement with the elders here being a personal contract, you could neither in the eyes of the civil law nor in the eyes of God make another contract as you did with the Northridge Church for the delivery of the same services personally while at the same time being bound to render the identical, personal services to us. There is no such urgency in accepting the call of a congregation to preach for it that would justify the acceptance of that call when at the same time being bound to preach for another.

We have also made investigation with regard to your failure to carry out your agreement, which leaves it impossible for us to accept your letter as a complete statement of your side of this matter. Therefore, we are hereby kindly entreating you, for your benefit, and because we are members one of another, to let us have a letter, or if you prefer to personally come, to come setting forth the whole truth of your failure to come as you had agreed to work with us, in case of the letter, the same to be read to the congregation here in your behalf and so that none be weakened by your actions.

We have discussed personally coming to you in an effort to rectify the matter, but feel this will not be necessary, and instead will await your reply hereto.

Your getting this matter straight will determine your influence in this section, brethren far and wide, including Jean Thornton, Macon; Bob Anderson, Columbus; O. D. Hervey, Louisville and even as far away as Maysville, Alabama, and Stanley D. Crews and Emerson J. Estes of Memphis, to mention most of the preachers, having been told of your agreement to come work with us, there being no reasonable or satisfactory explanation to this date of your actions that can be given to our brethren, many of whom, being those who know of your failure to come, cannot understand

your actions.

This letter is written at the command of the elders of Friendship Church of Christ as authorized by a rough draft thereof adopted by the elders on October 7, 1956.

Our prayers are for you, and for your speedy attention to this matter.

Your brother in Christ,

W.D. Coleman

W. D. Coleman

P. S. We have Bible study mid-week at 7:00 o'clock P.M., so if you desire to personally come down at a mid-week service, feel free to do so - *W.D.C.*

Dayton, Ohio
Nov. 7, 1956

Friendship Church of Christ
Ackerman, Mississippi

Dear Brethren in the Lord,

The receipt of a letter written by W.D. Coleman for you, the Elders of Friendship has caused me considerable consternation. In answering that letter I feel that you need a copy of the same before you as I begin my humble answer to your charges.

My prayer is that I may conduct myself always in a manner approved by God. Yet, I do not intend to sacrifice principle for expediency even in moments of ill will such as your letter conveyed to me through its verbose claims. My one aim in answering your charges is that I may be found worthy in some small way to receive the blessing of Jehovah. "Since thou hast been precious in my sight, and honorable, and I have loved thee..." Above all else I desire the love of God and I realize that in order to have that love I must love and merit the love of my brethren. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently." I covet your love and concern, therefore, I humbly implore you to listen to my claims.

It was my understanding that the entire agreement made on May 31st was conditional on the fact that I would work with the Friendship congregation on my return to Freed-Hardeman College. If this condition was not set forth that night I beg your forgiveness for the manner in which I conducted the notifying you of my inability to work with you. Col. 3:9 sets before me an injunction that I must follow. "Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings." I feel that said condition was realized at the very outset of our discussion that night. Therefore, I would not be expected to give you a chance to try to make me come or as your letter stated, "give any indication of your intention not to fulfill your agreement with the elders on the night of May 31st here at Friendship." I felt confidently that all you expected was a notification of my plans to attend a different school, namely Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, which I am doing presently. That notification, beloved brethren, was sent to you at my first opportunity, no sooner than I could have been with you at Friendship had I gone to Freed-Hardeman College.

The next charge placed against me is, "By your not contacting the elders upon changing your mind, you deprived them of an opportunity of trying to make an adjustment, if such had been deemed warranted, in order to still make sure your working in the Lord's Kingdom here." It would appear to my lowly understanding of the situation, brethren, that this was unnecessary when it was made known that I would no longer attend Freed-Hardeman College and instead attend a school in Ohio. You are placing my work with you ahead of my completing an education which you know so very assuredly would benefit the Kingdom of God a hundred fold more than my feeble efforts at Friendship. I realize my services were not worth anything near the amount you were to pay me. I know that my worth to God's Holy House could never even start to approach the minute amount of money I would have received, yet, Paul very definitely states that, "Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel." The God of heaven knows how little I feel are my powers of service and yet, I pray that you will not think that I am merchandising the sacred Word when I say that if I had worked with you, which I would have done had I gone to Freed-Hardeman College, the amount you could pay me would not have covered my elemental expenses, married or unmarried.

"Now, with reference to your letter, while it is manifest from its entirety that you know in your own mind you have erred against brethren and sisters in the Lord, you fail to make a full disclosure of all the truth concerning your actions." It was never my intention to make any such inferences against my character. If I felt that I had sinned against you brethren the sun would not set on my without having talked with you and corrected the situation. Yet, since you make the blatant charge it is between you and God. The order of discipline given in the New Testament tells you to come to me if you feel I have erred against you. "And if thy brother sin against thee, go show him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church; and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto them as the Gentile and the publican." Matt. 18:15-17

I have been accused of sin. I have prayed to God for my brethren who have so charged me. I do hope that you brethren realize the severity of your charges and the implications of the same. "...and that you might without question be in condition to receive forgiveness for what we, after thorough and prayerful consideration; with all humility, believe to have been a transgression against God;..." My constant prayer to Jehovah is that I may stand justified in his sight and that you may understand this grave charge which

I firmly believe to be erroneous.

This matter has been discussed with the Elders of the Northridge Church of Christ, 5900 N. Dixie, Dayton 4, Ohio, where I am now working. I have used nothing in this letter that I felt would even begin to be hurtful to any person because I love the cause of Christ at Friendship as I do everywhere and I feel that only by sensible, sound, scriptural thinking can such matters be worked out. This attitude causes me to send forth this feeble yet, truthful attempt to answer the preponderate letter sent me on this matter.

In order that I may leave you no ground upon which to scripturally base your charges I plan to remit the \$60 even though it was used for mission work. I do not have the means to send it in one sum but you will receive a check each week for \$5 until I have paid back the amount plus a contribution I wish to make to your work and to cover interest on the money. Herein you will find a check to Friendship Church of Christ for the first payment of \$5 .

"My prayers are for you, and your speedy attention to this matter."

Fraternally yours,

John Allen Chalk
2001 Division Ave.
Dayton 4, Ohio

cl:jac

Nov. 26, 1956
Dayton, Ohio

Friendship Church of Christ
Elders
c/O J. E. Hunt
R # 2
Ackerman, Mississippi

Dear Sirs,

This past week it was my privilege to enjoy a conversation with Clarence Pearce while attending the Homecoming at Freed-Hardeman College. At that time Clarence and I discussed the situation between you and me. I was made to see what caused you to retort at you did to me and as a result I feel much better about the situation.

I am writing you to say that I feel very sure that the entire matter could have been avoided had I notified you sooner but due to circumstances beyond my control I contacted you as soon as I knew myself what I would do. I am sorry that the matter was not cleared up at the time I decided to stay in Dayton and go to school. I could have come down there but my financial condition would not allow it. I want you to accept this letter as an expression of my deepest regrets that I did not contact you sooner and thereby avoid the ugly situation that transpired.

I understand that you felt that your money was used in a purchase of my car. I can assure that every penny in my present car has come from the Northridge Church of Christ who approved 100% the purchase. I obtained this car due to the fact that I tore up a car on the Canada work and your money was used in that work!! But in order to leave no room for future mishaps I am giving you the money to use in the work down there. I still feel very strongly concerning the grave charges you laid against me of lying and sinning against you, nevertheless, I pray God that you may see your error before it is eternally too late.

My prayers are for you and your work for the Lord in and around Ackerman.

Faternally yours,

John Allen Chalk

Ackerman, Miss.
April 4. 1957

Dear Brother Chalk,

I received your letter yesterday, was
glad to hear from you. This leaves us
fine at present. we are having full
time preaching at the Church these days.
Bro. Albert Will is our preacher.
we hope you are enjoying your work
with the Church at Northridge.

well, Bro. Chalk I don't think any
one is angry with you and I think
it best to forget the past and
all of us try to live where we will be
acceptable in the work of the Lord.
we have purchased a lot in Ackerman
we hope to start building in the
summer. John Allen we would be
glad to have you visit us sometime.
my prayers are for your work in the
Lord to be successful and approved.

your Brother,

J. E. Hunt